

Maulana Rumi and Shah Din

By Shafqat Tanvir Mirza

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It was the West which encouraged militancy in the Muslim world, particularly in the countries which in the past were parts of the Turkish Khilafat. Till that time it was only military power through which the countries were conquered. In our times or during the last century two world wars were fought which were started by the West itself.

The present situation has also been created by the Western powers, may be capitalists or communists. What is happening in Afghanistan after 9/11 and after the invasion of the Soviet Russia is also the creation of the West. During these militant clashes the most aggressive power of the last and the current centuries..., the United States...has brought back the mystic Islam or mysticism through the Sufi poets, including Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi....Turkey-based Persian poet whose poetry was popularized among the Americans.

In other parts of the world, many of the American foundations worked for the promotion of this mysticism. Even in Pakistan deposed president Pervez Musharraf and the president of his faction of Muslim League Chaudhry Shujaat Husain and now the Academy of Letters did their best for the promotion of mysticism.

Maulana Rumi was a great Sufi poet after Fariduddin Attar and ruled the literary and the religious world where the Persian was in vogue. Even after the Persian was replaced by the British as the official language of the subcontinent, it was taught as a subject in the education system. Some of our towering personalities were more efficient and fluent in Persian than Urdu. Such was the case of Allama Iqbal who at an early stage rejected mysticism but fondly embraced it in later years and because of that he used Persian for spreading his message and philosophy. Before him, Ghalib was proud of his Persian poetry than Rekhta or Urdu.

It was Allama Iqbal's early period when in Punjab almost all the poetry of Punjabi Sufi poets was published and at least two Punjabi Sufi poets belonging to Sufi families, Khwaja Ghulam Farid and Mian Muhammad Bukhsh, were immensely popular in their respective areas. But that was not all.

The demand for the mystic poetry in Punjabi had become a market force and the Punjab publishers engaged poets to translate the poetry of Persian Sufi poets. They first got the poetry of the local

Sufis like Khwaja Moeenuddin Chishti, Bu Ali Shah Qalander and Sultan Bahu, translated and then Mahmood Shabistari, Hafiz Sheerazi, Fariduddin Attar, Jami and Maulana Rum, whose whole masnavi (six parts) was translated and the translator was Maulvi Shah Din of Sialkot.

It is written in the foreword by the publisher that Shah Din had translated all parts (daftar) of the masnavi while the first was being published which contains original Persian followed by its Punjabi version. The book is spread over 590 large-size pages containing eight verses with the translation but where had gone the other parts – a matter for researchers.

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi was born in December, 1207, and died in the same month of 1275 at the age of 68 years. His translator was born in Sialkot in 1870 in a learned family. His great grandfather had migrated from Qadian in Gurdaspur district to Kotli Loharan. On his death Shah's grandfather Ghulam Mustafa who was also a good Punjabi poet shifted to Mohalla Rangpura, Sialkot city.

He received his education from his father Qutbuddin Qureshi in Arabic, Persian and at the age of 20 he had earned a good command on religious knowledge. Because of the unemployment in the field of his traditional profession, he joined the education department as a teacher in a Sialkot school. But he was not satisfied and left the job to serve Sufi Ali Asghar Shah about whom he in his brief foreword in Punjabi verse says that he belonged to Ritaley village and he was poet's guide while translating the Masnavi the job he completed in four years. Before Masnavi he had already translated many of the above mentioned works.

Allama Iqbal has earlier rejected mysticism as the decadent form of religion which ceases the spirit of fighting zealously for a cause but at a later stage he not only turned to mysticism but accepting Rumi as his spiritual guide wrote poetry reflecting deep imprints of Sufis on his thoughts and philosophy. Jalaluddin Rumi was born in a well-to-do family class related to the rulers of Balkh but had incurred the wrath and jealousy of the ruler. The family traveled to seek permanent residence and in the last they settled in Qoniya (now in Turkey).

During these travels Rumi met Fariduddin Attar who gave him his book Asrarnama. Prof Ruben Levy in his small book Persian Literature writes: Whether Jalaluddin came under the direct influence of the older poet or not, his spiritual indebtedness to him is undoubted, though he was destined to outshine his predecessor in the art of mystical poetry....he turned to the study of mysticism, under such masters as Burhanuddin Tirmizi and later under the mysterious wandering dervish known as Shams Tabrez. And after the death of Shams, Rumi to perpetuate his friend's memory founded a new order of dervisha, known as dancing dervish.

Now some of the popular verses of Rumi in original and their Punjabi and English translation by Shah Muhammad and Prof Levy:

And translation in English:

Hail to thee, O love, our sweat melancholy,
Thou physician of all our ills;

Thou purge of our pride and conceit,
That art our Plato and our Galen.
Our earthy body, through love, is raised to the skies
Mountains take to dancing and to nimbleness.
Love became the soul of Senai, lover
Sinai was intoxicated and Moses full swooning.